



J. Anna Blackburne-Rigsby

AFGHAN JUDGES

There were seven judges at oral arguments before the District of Columbia Court of Appeals on September 13, but only three were on the bench. As part of an exchange program sponsored by the International Association of Women Judges, four women judges from Afghan courts sat in on last week's proceedings. D.C. Court of Appeals Judge **Anna Blackburne-Rigsby** hosted them at the court. "It's a powerful experience for me to meet these women, who are committed to their court systems working in Afghanistan, [taking] pride in the work that they do," she said. The program, which the association has run for several years with the State Department, involves several weeks of training and programs in Washington and Vermont focused on international law and women's human rights issues. Blackburne-Rigsby said this year's group included a judge from a criminal court in Kabul, one from a government-corruption tribunal and another who hears civil cases. She said she won't be traveling to Afghanistan any time soon, but that there was "something very special about having the discussion with other women about the work that we do as judges." — *Zoe Tillman*